



ABN E-NEWS

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Happy Nurses Week from ABN

Peggy Sellers Benson, RN, MSHA, MSN, NE-BC

Well, it's that time of year again—the week where nurses and the public throughout the United States spend the week celebrating the past, present, and future of our noble profession and the countless contributions millions of nurses worldwide have made to the health and well-being of patients and their families.

Most of you will know that the annual occasion of Nurses Week was carefully chosen to begin on May 6 and culminate on May 12, the birthday of the founder of modern nursing and perhaps the most revered nurse of all time—Florence Nightingale. As we kick off this celebration, I thought it would be a good time to recall the Florence Nightingale Pledge, which was composed in her honor:

"I solemnly pledge myself before God and in the presence of this assembly, to pass my life in purity and to practice my profession faithfully. I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous, and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug. I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession, and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my calling. With loyalty will I endeavor to aid the physician in his work, and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care."

The practice of nursing is constantly evolving, as new technologies, new medicines, new diagnoses, and changes in healthcare require nurses to adapt to their professional environments. This has been true of our profession from the beginning, but it has never been more true than it is today. I can't tell you how proud we are of each of you nurses who are out there in the trenches every day caring and advocating for patients and for healthcare and healthy living daily. Whether you're a nurse or a consumer, please take a moment this week to thank the nurses in your life for all that they do.

HAPPY NURSES WEEK!

Does Professionalism Need to be Redefined?

Francine Mancuso Parker, EdD, MSN, RN

Throughout the 2016 calendar year, ABN will be focusing on strategies for developing and maintaining professional standards for communication.

As I sat in a large metropolitan hospital waiting room while a family member was undergoing surgery, I entertained myself with a favorite pastime—people watching. My keen observation skills have served me well for nearly forty years as a nurse and I want to share some of my not surprising finds from that five hour excursion. I must admit, the waiting room outing affirmed feared contentions I have had for quite some time as I have grown older and facilitated the education of hundreds of baccalaureate nursing students. Call me Pollyanna, call me old fashioned, call me out of touch with today's culture of young people and in particular new nurses. I admit being on the older (seasoned or mature) end of the multigenerational gap. Fine. But I have a disheartening concern that the term or concept of professionalism may indeed need to be revisited for nursing, or at least the component that reflects dress and mannerisms.

When I think of professional behaviors or professionalism—several images come to mind. A confident, meticulously groomed, assertively poised, well dressed individual proud to be a member and representative of said profession. Dress reflects the image of a profession. I know I do not want airline pilot and flight attendants all wearing scrub type suits, even if they wear different colored fabrics with various animals and cartoon characters to set them apart.

The issues of dress, presentation, and mannerisms, in my humble opinion, are ones the nursing profession should examine before we get any more lax, any more tolerant and nurses are coming to work in plaid flannel pajama bottoms (because they are comfortable!). Here is my point: So far as dress goes, there seems to be a blurring of the distinction between health professionals and many other occupations. The checkout clerk at your grocer is likely to don the same scrub suit as the nurse in the cardiovascular intensive care unit. Pediatric scrub suits mirror the ones I have seen on technicians in my pet's boarding facility. I remember when green and blue (plain; no cockatoos) were reserved for the intensive care unit nurses. We wore our clothes to the hospital, changed into scrubs, and returned to our clothes when we clocked out to go home.

Scrub suits have become the norm for health care setting employees. Comfort has surpassed image. Scrub suits, in my humble opinion, have a place—but are overused as every registered, licensed practical nurse, unlicensed assistive personnel, housekeeping, and 'environmental maintenance' personnel can choose to wear them. There do not seem to be clearly demarcated lines between these entities, so far as dress goes. I think this is a mistake, but one which is hardly at the forefront of political and social agendas, or on anyone's agenda at all. I am not suggesting that all registered nurses return to the days of white uniforms (or ivory, mother of pearl, off-white, etc.) and clinic shoes. But I would offer that nursing directors, administrators, and educators examine what professionalism means for nurses—what does it look like? What image do we want the nurse of the 21st century to portray?

While I have your attention, allow me to express yet another personal opinion regarding my number one pet peeve. At this point, any of my past students could correctly guess the aversion I am about to reveal. Gum Chewing. Gum chewing while in uniform (scrub suit or otherwise). Gum chewing in the hospital while administering patient care. Just take a moment and imagine yourself in a hospital bed, still nauseated from the cafeteria food; waking up from anesthesia; or moments away from the IV being started and your nurse is standing over you, smacking gum! Imagine a scene where gum accidentally falls from the nurse's mouth onto the patient as she changes a wound dressing. I observed nurses carrying on conversations with physicians, family members, and other nurses all the while chewing, and even more offensively, smacking gum. I submit that this is not only distasteful, but unprofessional. And I am not alone!

Let's be sensible, my colleagues! What do we want 'professional' to mean for our practice? We each have a responsibility to uphold the standards that make our noble profession one of the most esteemed and respected in the land. Let's return to dress that distinguishes the registered nurse, projects professionalism, and evokes respect. And... discard your gum on the way to work!

Dr. Parker is Associate Dean and the Betty McLendon Fuller Endowed Associate Professor with the Auburn University School of Nursing. She presently is serving her second one-year term as President of the Alabama Board of Nursing.



An Update on the Alabama Nursing Resource Center (ANRC)

LaDonna M. Patton, MSN, RN, CEN
Director, ANRC

With the launch of the new website, the Alabama Nursing Resource Center (ANRC) is now a reality at the Alabama Board of Nursing (ABN). The ANRC includes information for the public on the roles of the various types of nurses, including Advanced Practice Nurses, and also serves as the central location for all online CE offered by the ABN. We presently are in the process of revising substantially all of the existing ABN-provided CE courses, so check back periodically for updates and additions. The ANRC expects new online CE offerings to become available in the coming months as the ABN will be partnering with Graduate Nursing Students to develop and share educational activities for all licensees. Graduate Nursing Students will also have research opportunities at the ABN.

This partnership with Graduate Nursing Students will be possible through collaboration with the State's Graduate Nursing Programs and the Graduate Nursing Student and Research Advisory Council which the ABN appointed in February 2016. The first meeting of the Advisory Council was held on April 29, 2016, and will report back to the ABN at a later date.

The leadership of Board, including ABN Executive Officer Peggy Benson, have made the stated objective of the ANRC to become "the go-to place for all things nursing in Alabama." Board staff are working hard to make that vision a reality by developing an easy-to-navigate website and ready access to information. We ask all nurses, students, or members of the public who are interested to visit the "Links" section of the ANRC website. There, you will find links to various State, National, and International entities pertinent to nursing.

Also available for nurses and the public is the Public Education: Lifestyle, Health, Nutrition, and Self-Care section for information on life-long healthy living, as well as tips for managing illness. All of this and more is available on the ANRC website: <http://www.abn.alabama.gov/alabama-nursing-resource-center/>.

Alabama Legislature Approves Loan Repayment Program for Advanced Practice Nurses

Peggy Sellers Benson, RN, MSHA, MSN, NE-BC

It is my pleasure to share some very exciting news with all of our licensees. Prior to adjourning the 2016 Regular Session, the Alabama Legislature granted final passage to HB 228, which establishes a loan repayment program for CRNP, CNM, and CRNA students who agree to work in an area of critical need in the state for a period of time following completion of their programs. This legislation was proposed by Governor Bentley and sponsored by Representative April Weaver (R-Alabaster), the only nurse currently serving in the Legislature, and Senator Greg Reed (R-Jasper). Additionally, the Legislature has provided \$450,000 to fund the program next Fiscal Year. I can't tell you how excited we are, as we begin the process of writing Regulations and establishing processes to implement this new program, which will have an enormous impact on the nursing profession and on access to quality care in underserved communities. We encourage all of you to reach out and thank your legislators and the Governor for their leadership on this issue.

Changing for the Better

ABN Continues to Make Policy Changes to Benefit Licensees and the Public

Honor L. Ingels

Over the past couple of years, the Alabama Board of Nursing has embarked on a New Direction, articulated by our Executive Officer, Peggy Benson, and enthusiastically embraced by the Board members, staff, licensees, and the public. This new philosophy of governance includes more proactive communication and a spirit of openness, but it also involves concrete steps, such as launching the Alabama Nursing Resource Center to broaden access to information on nursing and healthcare for nurses and the public, as well as an aggressive approach to modernizing our regulatory policies and processes. Key to this last part is the regular review and revision of the ABN Administrative Code to ensure that our rules and regulations keep pace with current practice and maintain the highest standards for public protection. Recent changes in the Administrative Code you should find of interest include:

- **New and Updated Rules for Continuing Education (CE):** Following a routine and in-depth review of the CE Rules, the ABN made a number of revisions to ABN Administrative Code Chapter 610-X-10, "Continuing Education for Licensure." These changes clarify appropriate courses for CE credit, as well as the manner for recording your CE credit, and were effective March 24, 2016. Please feel free to review the current rules and stay up-to-date on what is asked of licensees at <http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/nurs/610-X-10.pdf>.
- **Elimination of License and Advanced Practice Approval Cards:** In response to reports of license fraud nationwide, the Board voted in September 2015 to curtail issuing of license and advanced practice approval cards. Instead, this year, we will begin issuing certificates of licensure and CE cards, which look very much like the existing license cards, except that they do not include a license number. These cards will be swiped at CE events to electronically record your CE credits exactly as you presently do with your license card. This necessary change required a revision of the sections of the ABN Administrative Code pertaining to licensure and referring to cards; changes are effective June 7, 2016. You may review the entire Administrative Code at <http://www.abn.alabama.gov/laws/#tab-code>.
- **New and Updated Practice Rules:** In the course of our routine review of the Administrative Code, a number of necessary additions and revisions to Chapters 610-X-6, "Standards of Practice," and 610-X-7, "Standards of Practice; Specific Settings," were identified, including the addition of a section on telehealth nursing. The Board voted in April 2016 to propose these revisions, which may be reviewed at <http://www.abn.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Proposed-changes-chp6-7.pdf>. These changes are proposals and have not been formally adopted by the Board, so interested parties are welcome to offer their comments. The Board will take public comment until 4:30 p.m. on Friday, June 3, 2016.